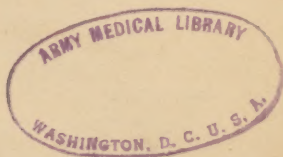


A
DESCRIPTION
OF THE
Great Historical Painting
OF THE
LAST DAYS OF WEBSTER
AT MARSHFIELD.

PAINTED BY
JOSEPH AMES, OF BOSTON.

NEW YORK:
SMITH & PARMELEE,
1857.



THE
LAST DAYS OF WEBSTER
AT MARSHFIELD.

NEITHER the records of former nor of modern times, of public or of private life, furnish an instance partaking so largely of all that is beautiful, grand, and sublime, as the Last Days of Daniel Webster at Marshfield.

From the commencement of his illness up to the last hour, not a day passed but from which could be recalled some eventful scene worthy to be recorded in golden letters, and furnishing to the artist subjects for his canvas upon which he might exhaust a lifetime.

But there was one scene which far transcended all others in interest, the climax—the crowning act of his eventful life, never to be forgotten—which will be remembered as long as the name of the

immortal Webster. It was on the afternoon of Tuesday, October 19th, 1852, when he called his family and household, and the many friends who had gathered at Marshfield, to his room, that he might, while his mind was vigorous and unimpaired, speak to each of the great lesson of life, of death, and immortality. It was to this occasion the Hon. Edward Everett so beautifully alluded in a speech soon after Mr. Webster's death; he said: "In the long and honored career of our lamented friend there are efforts and triumphs which will hereafter fill one of the brightest pages of our history; but I greatly err if in this last scene at Marshfield the height of the religious sublime does not, in the judgment of other days, far transcend in interest the brightest exploits of public life. Within that darkened chamber at Marshfield was witnessed a scene of which we shall not readily find the parallel: the serenity with which he stood in the presence of the 'king of terrors,' without trepidation; the thoughtfulness for the public business when the sands were so nearly run out; the hospitable care for the reception of the friends who came to Marshfield; that affectionate and solemn parting of wife and children, and kindred, and friends, and family, down to the

humblest members of the household; the designation of the coming day then near at hand, when all that was mortal of Daniel Webster should cease to exist."

This sublime, impressive, and beautiful scene has inspired the genius of one of our most gifted artists, and with the talent for which he is justly celebrated, Joseph Ames, of Boston, has transfixed it to canvas, and it "STILL LIVES" in shadow. Many of our connoisseurs and most eminent men have watched the progress of this painting with interest, and all have witnessed with pleasure its completion, and are alike unanimous in its approval. As a historical painting it is undoubtedly at the head of all others produced in this country.

The painting embraces twenty-two figures from life, comprising Mr. Webster's family and relatives, and those friends who were at Marshfield.

The subject of this picture being one of national interest, and the work one that confers so much credit upon the arts of our country, it has been determined to have a fine Steel Engraving of appropriate size executed from it, and for this purpose the services of Mr. Charles Mottram, one of the most eminent engravers in Europe, have been secured, and the painting has already been taken

to London and placed in his hands, and is now in process of engraving.

The following letters are from distinguished gentlemen who saw the painting previous to its being taken to Europe :

FROM FLETCHER WEBSTER, ESQ.

BOSTON, *January 27th*, 1855.

DEAR SIR—I have just returned from Mr. Ames' studio, where I have been to give him the last sitting for my portrait, introduced into the great picture. I can not refrain from expressing to you my extreme gratification on seeing this noble work so nearly finished and so ably treated.

I am particularly pleased with the correctness of the likenesses of the relatives and friends who are there introduced ; but I most of all admire that of my father, which all my family and friends agree with me in pronouncing the most life-like and characteristic that has ever been made.

I beg leave to congratulate you on having been the means of calling forth a work of so much excellence, so high in art, and so true to history, and I hope your exertions may be repaid by the most complete success in all respects.

Very respectfully and truly yours,

FLETCHER WEBSTER.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM THE HON. RUFUS CHOATE.

* * * I think Mr. Ames' painting of the Last Days of Webster at Marshfield a very superior production—one of the finest works of art which our country has produced or often seen. Without dwelling on other features, the great central figure presents at once a most characteristic likeness, and a moment and a spectacle of unequalled interest and grandeur.

RUFUS CHOATE.

FROM THE HON. MOSES H. GRINNELL.

NEW YORK, *February 20, 1855.*

GENTLEMEN—Having availed myself of your invitation to examine the painting by Ames, of "The Last Days of Mr. Webster at Marshfield," I should do injustice to my feelings did I neglect to express my gratitude for the opportunity of witnessing what I think will be considered by all a most superior painting. I can speak of no particular point of excellence where all seems so nearly perfect. The picture speaks to the beholder in words which can not be written, transporting him, as it were, back to the moment when the great statesman and orator, standing on that narrow isthmus between time and eternity, his earthly hopes and ambitions all laid aside, calmly and resignedly addressed so affectionately to his sorrowing relations and friends words to be treasured in the deep recesses of their memory.

I am pleased to know that you have determined to have an engraving made from this painting, as it is a work a copy of which every American must be proud to possess.

Yours, etc., MOSES H. GRINNELL.

FROM NELSON ROBINSON, ESQ.

{ 41 UNION SQUARE,
} NEW YORK, *June 26, 1855.*

GENTLEMEN—It affords me pleasure to express the great satisfaction with which I examined the historical picture of the last days of our great statesman, Daniel Webster. I regard the likenesses of the friends assembled on that occasion as very faithful, and some of them are certainly admirable delineations. I think the portraiture of Mr. Choate, Mr. Curtis, Mr. Harvey, Mrs. Daniel Webster, and Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher Webster as exceedingly happy efforts of art; and I do not doubt that the others are equally good, but I am not so conversant with their faces as to justify an opinion. The picture has delighted me, and I am glad that the country will possess so satisfactory a reminiscence of the last hours of the illustrious statesman who has left behind him such imperishable claims upon the homage and affection of our whole country.

I am, gentlemen, respectfully yours,

NELSON ROBINSON.

FROM HON. A. C. KINGSLAND,

(Ex-Mayor of New York.)

NEW YORK, *February 26, 1855.*

GENTLEMEN—Of the painting of the “Last Days of Daniel Webster at Marshfield,” by Ames, which through your courtesy I had the pleasure of seeing, there can be but one opinion. Whether considered in relation to the fidelity of the portraits, the beauty of the coloring, or the happy manner in which the figures are grouped, it is a work which I think has rarely, if ever, been excelled in this country. As a historical effort it will be, if possible, more appreciated by future generations than by our own, while at the same time it serves to show that our country is not without artistic genius of the highest order.

Yours, etc., A. C. KINGSLAND.

FROM PROFESSOR PARSONS,

(Of Harvard University.)

CAMBRIDGE, *June 22, 1855.*

* * * I have seen and studied Mr. Ames' picture of the “Last Days of Webster at Marshfield” with great interest and pleasure. Its beauty, and its truthfulness, and simplicity are remarkable. It preserves the dignity and impressiveness of the scene it presents, without any thing of exaggeration or affectation.

The artist has given to Mr. Webster's face the expression proper to the time and circumstances, and drawn a faithful likeness of the man. The other portraits are good

also. That of Mr. Choate, in particular, seems to me a spirited, exact, and characteristic likeness of that near and true friend of Mr. Webster.

Yours, etc., THEOPHILUS PARSONS.

FROM DR. WARREN.

BOSTON, *June 24, 1855.*

* * * Mr. Ames' representation of the "Last Days of Webster" is, I think, one of the most interesting pictures which has appeared in this country. As a work of art it has great merit; the colors are happily blended, the figures are well grouped, and the likenesses unusually correct.

As a moral lesson it is instructive. The solemn fact that death must come to the gigantic physical frame and genius of the mighty statesman, is represented with circumstances which may make an impression on any man's mind, and ^{lead} to the realization that neither strength nor influence can ward off the inevitable hour.

I am your obedient servant,

J. MASON WARREN.

Mr. CHARLES MOTTRAM, of London, in acknowledging the safe arrival of the painting, adds: "I think it a most excellent production of art, and it will make a very effective engraving."

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM HON. FRANKLIN DEXTER.

BOSTON, June, 1855.

* * * Mr. Ames' picture of the "Last Days of Daniel Webster," which has gone to London to be engraved, is a fine conception of the scene; the artist has managed the details with great skill of composition. In addition to a deep and rich tone of color, the light of the setting sun is introduced in such a manner as to produce a brilliant effect of *chiaro oscuro*. If it shall be rendered as well as the well-known reputation of the engraver gives us a right to expect, it can not fail to have great success.

FRANKLIN DEXTER.



NOTICES OF THE PRESS.

FROM THE BOSTON DAILY COURIER.

"THE LAST DAYS OF DANIEL WEBSTER AT MARSHFIELD."—* * * Mr. Ames' treatment of the whole subject we think to be of the highest poetical stamp, and true alike to art and nature. There is nothing melodramatic—no straining for effect—nothing overdone, nor out of place. It is the poetry of nature, the beauty of simplicity, the grandeur of gigantic repose. The golden beams of a glorious sunset, so emblematic of life's falling sands, enter the apartment, forming, as it were, a bridge of light from earth to heaven, and rest upon the head of the expiring statesman, as he reclines upon a couch address-

ing those around him. There is a certain dignity and repose in the figure of Mr. Webster which nobly agrees with his character. The majesty of the man is there, and the gigantic spirit, dilated as it were by the dawning light of another world, is almost seen going forth with beautiful calmness and undaunted courage to meet the "king of terrors."

"Not like the quarry-slave, at night
Scourged to his dungeon, but sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust;
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

There is an elevation of sentiment pervading the whole work which is truly delightful, showing the masterly power of the artist over his materials, and great knowledge of the requisites to the highest developments of such a subject. We had expected to find in this picture the hackneyed treatment of all death-bed scenes; but such was not the death-bed scene of Daniel Webster at Marshfield, and such is not the scene here depicted by the artist. There is, indeed, a deep and quiet feeling of sorrow—"not harsh sorrow, but a tender woe"—but yet so elevated and enlivened by that triumphant cheerfulness which the going down of such a sun was so well calculated to diffuse. Mr. Webster felt assured of a double immortality. He had lived sufficiently long to achieve all that the loftiest ambition could aspire to—a never-dying earthly fame—and he was not unwilling to exchange this mortal for that brighter, better immortality which his far-seeing intellect so clearly saw awaiting him beyond the narrow stream of death.

The picture, aside from the interest which it will excite

on account of the accuracy of the portrait of the chief character, will also be valuable, not only as a representation of a great historic event, but as containing true likenesses of some of the greatest men now living.

FROM THE NEW YORK JOURNAL OF COMMERCE.

(*From their regular Boston Correspondent.*)

BOSTON, Jan 29th, 1855.

Every American reader will remember the memorable autumn of 1852, in connection with the dispatches that were received daily from Marshfield, after the health of Daniel Webster became very precarious. A few days before the exit of his immortal spirit, the illustrious invalid was unusually cheerful, and even playful, and proposed to his friends to take his usual place at the dinner-table. The company were made quite happy, for a moment, that Mr. Webster seemed so much better; but their heavens were soon darkened. The great statesman did not dine with his family; but, instead, called his friends to his bedside, toward the close of day, that he might tell them of his approaching end, and that he might speak to them, one by one, of life, of death, and of immortality.

It was a happy thought to place that scene upon canvas. This Mr. Ames, a great artist of this city, has done, and has done it to the life. We can see the very

“Chamber where the good man met his fate”

so peacefully, so triumphantly. We can see “the foremost man of all this world” not a whit less great because he was near the gates of death and glory, but greater than

ever before, for he is about to meet and to conquer a greater enemy than ever he met, and to vanquish him—and that is Death. It is true that the body is prostrate upon his couch. It is true that his raised hand has not its usual vigor, that his pointed finger is quite pointless. But disease has not touched his soul, and his intellect is without a cloud. His full eyes, though bereft of the fire that they have so often darted in the court and the senate, beam with their wonted intelligence, and with more of heaven than of earth. Indeed, he seems to be pressing upward, upward to his final home, and to have caught something of its spirit.

Such is the chief figure of this great historical painting, and all eyes are turned up to him, and all ears are open to hear his parting words of wisdom, of beauty, and love. It is by no means a melancholy scene. It is rather one in which sublimity and beauty are co-mingled, and where the tears are more of joy than of sorrow; for he who has called that family group, those cherished domestics, and long-trying friends to his side, is not about to die, but to soar on his immortal career, and to “still live” in this world, as never before.

As a work of art this picture is destined to have a national reputation. The artist has shown his skill in presenting the “Last Days of Webster at Marshfield.” He has given us a painting that makes the beholder thoughtful indeed, but one in which there is far more of light and joy, of life and immortality, than of their opposites. The very chamber and its upholstery, with the rays of the setting sun that enter it from the northwestern window, is the chamber of the venerable mansion at Marshfield, and

not some real or fancied one of Italy. What is seen of the sky is American, and not Italian; a true Marshfield sunset. The center of interest looks like Mr. Webster ill, but it is himself ill, and not some one else—his form, features, expression, gesture, behavior—every thing. So every person in the room (for it is more like the real scene than one of an artist), looks like himself and herself. All appear as they should on such an occasion, and as *they did*. All have their proper places near the husband, the father, the grandfather, the brother, the friend, or more remote. The servants, who loved their master, know and keep their proper places. In a word, the coloring, the light, the shade, the reliefs, are true to nature, and to proper artistic effect, and to nature in America, and not in England—to nature in Marshfield, and not in Washington.

We are fond of this new triumph of American art. It is worthy of the artist, of the subject, and the occasion, and that is saying much. It is daily visited by our citizens, who with one voice admire it; and those who have studied the best pictures of Europe assure us that it will add to the reputation of American art abroad as well as at home.

FROM THE HOME JOURNAL, MARCH 10TH, 1855.

Mr. Ames' great painting of the Last Days of Webster at Marshfield, which has been greatly admired here and in Boston, is on the way to England, to be engraved. * * * The treatment of the painting is very effective, and, as a work of art, it is highly creditable to the country.

FROM THE BOSTON EVENING TRANSCRIPT, JAN. 22, 1855.

A NEW PICTURE.—“The Last Days of Daniel Webster at Marshfield.” This picture is now nearly completed, and it is a work of uncommon merit. It will add largely to the reputation of its accomplished author, and we have no doubt that it will, when seen, excite a national interest. It is the greatest production of Mr. Webster’s greatest painter.

FROM THE BOSTON DAILY BEE, FEB. 3, 1855.

THE LAST MOMENTS OF DANIEL WEBSTER.—We yesterday had the gratification of witnessing Ames’ great historic picture, representing “The Last Moments of Daniel Webster at Marshfield.” The artist has been actively employed, in order to complete the picture by the departure of the next English steamer, as it is to go to England to be engraved. During the hours allotted to spectators the studio has been thronged with visitors. The picture is, in all probability, the best thing of the kind ever executed in America—worthy the fame of the artist and the greatness of the subject. There are twenty-two likenesses in the picture—those of Hon. Rufus Choate, Hon. Geo. Ashman, Hon. Edward Curtis, Hon. Jas. W. Page, Fletcher Webster, Esq., Peter Harvey, Esq., John Taylor the Farmer of Franklin, Mrs. Fletcher Webster, and Mrs. Daniel Webster, are remarkable likenesses, and the grouping is exquisitely designed and executed.

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| Freeman Allen, | Pemberton Sq., Boston. |
| Nathaniel Harris, | Pearl Street, “ |
| N. B. Gibbs, | Hancock Street, “ |
| William Perkins, | Winthrop Place, “ |
| Lewis W. Tappan, | Joy Street, “ |
| Charles C. Little, | Washington St., “ |
| Ignatius Sargent, | “ |
| S. Hooper, | Mt. Vernon St., “ |
| B. F. Burgess, | India Wharf, “ |
| W. F. Whitney, | Beacon Street, “ |
| John C. Potter, | Pearl Street, “ |
| Samuel O. Mead, | “ |
| Paran Stevens, | Revere House, “ |
| Otis Daniell, | Ashburton Place, “ |
| Samuel Curtis, | Stamford Street, “ |
| Francis Skinner, | Mt. Vernon St., “ |
| H. K. Horton, | Winthrop Place, “ |
| Mace Tisdale, | Rowe Street, “ |
| Eben Chadwick, | Mt. Vernon St., “ |
| R. M. Mason, | Pemberton Sq., “ |
| Charles H. Mills, | Milk Street, “ |
| Stephen M. Allen, | Congress Square, “ |
| Lewis Rice, | American House, “ |
| Amos A. Lawrence, | Milk Street, “ |
| William Ropes, | Beacon Street, “ |
| Hon. Albert Fearing, | Tremont Place, “ |

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| Samuel H. Fessenden, | Federal Street, Boston. |
| Willis & Co., <i>Bankers</i> , | State Street, “ |
| Francis Welch, | Louisburg Sq., “ |
| Albert Thorndike, | “ |
| Jacob Sleeper, | Summer Street, “ |
| Andrew Carney, | Summer Street, “ |
| Seth Adams, | “ |
| M. D. Phillips, | Washington St., “ |
| D. W. Barnes, | Commercial St., “ |
| Charles Sampson, | Washington St., “ |
| A. W. Thaxter Jr., | Mt. Vernon St., “ |
| Levi A. Dowley, | “ |
| Francis Williams, | “ |
| Charles Merriam, | Bowdoin Street, “ |
| George Howe, | Mt. Vernon St., “ |
| Col. T. E. Chickering, | Masonic Temple, “ |
| Charles Larkin, | Commere'l Wh'f, “ |
| John T. Heard, | Louisburg Sq., “ |
| Julius A. Palmer, | Washington St., “ |
| William W. Greenough, | Washington St., “ |
| Col. Charles G. Green, | Ed. <i>Boston Post</i> , “ |
| Hon. Joel Parker, | Cambridge St., “ |
| Alanson Abbie, M.D., | Boylston Street, “ |
| Hon. B. F. Hallett, | Court Street, “ |
| Samuel Lawrence, | Beacon Street, “ |
| Moses Grant, | Cambridge “ |

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| George Lunt, | Tremont House, Boston. |
| John H. Eastburn, | Chestnut Street, “ |
| James Read, | Beacon Street, “ |
| William Thomas, | Webster Bank, “ |
| Sidney Bartlett, | Beacon Street, “ |
| Abel Kendall, | Somerset Street, “ |
| Osmyn Brewster, | Washington St., “ |
| E. P. Whipple, | Merchant's Ex., “ |
| William P. Mason, | Mt. Vernon St., “ |
| Thomas Lamb, | Somerset Street, “ |
| Donald McKay, | “ |
| George B. Jones, | Washington St., “ |
| James Cheever, | Somerset Street, “ |
| Ives G. Bates, | State Street, “ |
| R. B. Forbes, | Merchant's Ex., “ |
| William Amory, | Beacon Street, “ |
| J. Amory Davis, | Suffolk Bank, “ |
| William Foster Otis, | Louisburg Sq., “ |
| Martin Brimmer, | Beacon Street, “ |
| J. G. Bachelder, | State Street, “ |
| Winslow Lewis, | Boylston Street, “ |
| C. Wilkins, | Boylston Street, “ |
| Uriel Crocker, | Somerset St., “ |
| Charles D. Gould, | Washington St., “ |
| Joshua Lincoln, | Washington St., “ |
| Alvin Adams, | Washington St., “ |

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| George Peabody, | Salem, Massachusetts. |
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| Francis Peabody, | " " |
| Hon. Joseph S. Cabot, | " " |
| Gen. W. Sutton, | " " |
| Thomas P. Pingree, | " " |
| S. A. Safford, | " " |
| Richard S. Rogers, | " " |
| John W. Treadwell, | " " |
| Michael Shepard, | " " |
| John Bertram, | " " |
| Alfred Peabody, | " " |
| Joseph Andrews, | " " |
| Andrew Ward, | " " |
| Charles F. Williams, | " " |
| Ripley Ropes, | " " |
| J. E. Fisk, | " " |
| M. W. Shepard, | " " |
| Henry Mellas, | " " |
| Eph'm Emerton, | " " |
| William H. Foster, | " " |
| Edward Smith, | " " |
| Thomas Trask, | " " |
| John Dwyer, | " " |
| C. M. Endicott, | " " |

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| Hon. Joseph R. Chandler, | “ |

The great labor in executing such an engraving, renders it impossible to give the time when it will be completed ; but being in the hands of Mr. Mott-ram, the publishers hope to see it finished in about two years.

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